

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for generating data, comprising:
  - providing a first file having at least one format definition including a plurality of field identifiers and a data value associated with at least one the field identifiers, the first file maintaining an identifier of at least a second file;
  - providing an instruction for managing the second file; and
  - generating to the second file a data string according to the format definition, the data string including the data value of the at least one field identifier.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein identifier of the at least second file is further defined as at least a portion of a name of the at least second file.
3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first file maintains information regarding a plurality of files and wherein the data value of the field identifier is generated to at least a third file of the plurality of files using at least one of the format definitions.
4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the method further includes:
  - creating, where the instruction is a create new file instruction, the second file and
  - inserting, according to the format definition, the data value associated with the field identifier; and
  - modifying, where the instruction is a modify file instruction, the second file with the data value of the field identifier using the format definition.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein a plurality of files are created where the instruction is the create new file instruction, the plurality of files created according to at least one of the format definitions with the data value associated with the field identifier.
6. The method of Claim 4, wherein a plurality of files are modified where the instruction is the modify file instruction, the plurality of files modified according to at least one of the format definitions with the data value associated with the field identifier.
7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the data value is further defined as test data.
8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the field identifier is a COBOL data definition and wherein at least a portion of the format definition defines a copybook.
9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the method further comprises:
  - modifying at least one of the field identifier and data value of the first file; and
  - modifying the instruction to indicate one of a create new file status or modify file status.
10. The method of Claim 1, wherein generating to the second file the data value further comprises:
  - reading the value from the first file;
  - associating the data value with the field identifier;
  - determining the format definition for writing to the second file; and

overwriting an old data in the field identifier in the second file with the data value of the field identifier using the format definition.

11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the instruction is further defined as a command line argument and wherein the method further comprises running an application from the command line including the command line argument to generate to the second file.
12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the instruction is maintained in the first file.
13. A system for providing data for test applications, comprising:
  - a storage component operable to maintain a first file having a format definition including a field identifier, and a data value associated with the field identifier;
  - and
  - a processing component programmed to read the first file and associate the data value with the field identifier, the processor component further operable, based on an instruction, to write the data value of the field identifier to a second file based on the format definition.
14. The system of Claim 13, wherein the instruction is a selectable from one of a command line argument and a control portion of the first file.
15. The system of Claim 13, wherein the field identifier and data value are contained in a definition portion of the first file.

16. The system of Claim 13, wherein the format definition is maintained in a format portion of the first file.

17. The system of Claim 13, wherein the processing component is further operable to identify the instruction as one of a change instruction and a new instruction, and wherein responsive to the change instruction the data value in the second file is changed using the field identifier and the format definition, and wherein responsive to the new instruction the data value is added to the second file based on to the field identifier and the format definition.

18. The system of Claim 13, wherein the storage component is further operable to maintain a plurality of data values associated with a plurality of field identifiers of the format definition and wherein the processor is programmed to modify the second and a third files with the plurality of data values of the field identifiers according to the format definition.

19. The system of Claim 13, wherein the storage component is further operable to maintain a plurality of data values associated with a plurality of field identifiers of the format definition and wherein the processor is programmed to generate to the second and a third files the plurality of data values of the field identifiers according to the format definition.

20. A method of generating test data for use to test an application, the method comprising:

identifying a data field and a data value for the data field to test an application;

providing a data definition including the data field and the data value to a property file;

providing an instruction for managing a test file; and

generating, based on an instruction, the data field and data value to the test file using the property file, the test file used to test the application.

21. The method of Claim 20, wherein providing the data field and data value to the test file includes generating a new test file having the data field and data value where the instruction is a generate new file instruction.

22. The method of Claim 20, wherein providing the data field and data value to the test file includes modifying a value in the test file with the data value of the data field where the instruction is a modify test file instruction.

23. The method of Claim 22, wherein only a value in the test file associated with the field identifier is modified with the data value.

24. The method of Claim 20, further comprising:

identifying a plurality of test files in the property file; and

generating to the plurality of test files the data value of the field identifier.

25. The method of Claim 24, further comprising using a first format definition to write to a first test file of the plurality of test files and using a second format definition to write to a second test file of the plurality of files.

26. The method of Claim 20, further comprising:

testing the application using the data value in the test file;

modifying the data value of the data field to the property file with a new value to further test the application;

generating to the test file the data field and the new value using the property file and based on the instruction; and

testing the application using the new value in the test file.

27. The method of Claim 26, wherein only the new value of the data field is written to the test file.